

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017585

FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL RPT ADDIS ABABA 0318 SENT ACTION SECSTATE & TEHRAN  
INFO BONN, CAIRO, JIDDA, KHARTOUM, LONDON, MOGADISCIO, NAIROBI,  
PARIS & ROME DTD 21 JAN 78

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0318

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, SOPN, AORG, OAU, ET, IR, SO, US

SUBJECT: OAU PRESS RELEASE ON IRAN AND HORN OF AFRICA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 0310

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT OAU JAN 20 PRESS RELEASE OFFERS  
US OPPORTUNITY TO REESTABLISH ITS POSITION OF EVENHANDEDNESS  
VIS-VIS THE OGADEN WAR, WHICH ETHIOPIA SEES US AS HAVING DEPARTED  
FROM IN RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. OAU HAS CHOSEN IRAN FOR BRUNT OF ITS CRITICISM IN JANUARY  
20 PRESS RELEASE. NO INTELLIGENT READER COULD OVERLOOK FACT,  
HOWEVER, THAT OAU WORDS ARE EQUALLY ADDRESSED TO ALL FOREIGN  
POWERS WHICH ARE OR MIGHT BE CONTEMPLATING DIRECT INTER-  
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VENTION IN WAR ON EITHER SIDE. OAU MSG WAS DIRECTLY INSPIRED BY  
KENYAN AMBASSADOR WHO WAS ATTEMPTING FIND FORMULA US GOVT COULD  
ENDORSE. GRANTED CRITICISM OF IRAN IS STRONG, BUT IT DOES  
REFLECT ATTITUDES OF MANY MODERATE AFRICAN DIPLOMATS HERE.

2. WE ARE PARTICULARLY STRUCK BY BALANCED LANGUAGE OF FINAL  
PARAGRAPH. IN ITS REFERENCE TO RESOLVING AFRICAN PROBLEMS IN

ACCORDANCE WITH OAU CHARTER PRINCIPLES, THERE IS NO TILT TOWARD ONE OR THE OTHER OF BELLIGERENTS, THEREBY GIVING BOTH TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION EQUAL WEIGHT IN ANY FUTURE NEGOTIATION OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. STATEMENT ALSO REAFFIRMS OAU'S PARAMOUNT ROLE IN SEEKING SUCH A SETTLEMENT AND WARNS ALL OUTSIDE MEDDLERS TO LEAVE AFRICAN AFFAIRS TO AFRICANS.

3. IF WE ARE INTERESTED IN PLAYING ROLE IN MEDIATING THIS WAR, AND BRINGING IT TO AN EARLY AND LASTING END, I HOPE WE CAN QUICKLY ENDORSE OAU STATEMENT IN TERMS THAT CAN BE CONVINCINGLY DEMONSTRATED TO BOTH ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA AS EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE NOT TAKING SIDES AND THAT US INFLUENCE SHOULD NOT BE DISREGARDED, IF BELLIGERENTS MOVE TOWARD NEGOTIATING TABLE IN COMING WEEKS. TO GIVE ENDORSEMENT ATTENTION IT DESERVES, IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IF IT COULD BE MADE IN FORM OF STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OR DEPUTY SECRETARY. IF WE COULD SEE OUR WAY CLEAR TO DO IT, I WOULD FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT WE COUPLE OUR ENDORSEMENT WITH SOME SORT OF PUBLIC RECOGNITION THAT ANY LASTING SETTLEMENT BASED ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY NECESSITATES AND PRESUPPOSES WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI ARMED FORCES FROM OGADEN. WE HOPE SHAH COULD BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND.

4. IN FIRST MEETING WITH MOFA AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR BERHANE DERESSA SINCE HIS RETURN FROM US, EMBOFF WAS TAKEN ABACK BY DEPTH OF FEELING BERHANE SHOWED OVER US ROLE IN HORN, PARTICULARLY  
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LARLY SINCE HE IS AS UNDERSTANDING OF US MOTIVES AS ANY OF OUR NORMAL CONTACTS. IN BERHANE'S VIEW, EPMG WAS FAST COMING TO CONVICTION, ON DUAL BASIS OF WHAT PRESIDENT SIAD IN JAN 12 PRESS CONFERENCE AND WHAT US GOVT CHOSE TO LEAVE UNSAID WITH RESPECT TO CONDEMNING SOMALI AGGRESSION AND DEMANDING WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI TROOPS FROM OGADEN, THAT US WAS BEGINNING TO TILT MORE AND MORE IN SOMALIA'S DIRECTION. PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR SOMALIS TO INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS WAS GENERALLY INTERPRETED AS US SUPPORT FOR CEASEFIRE IN PLACE, WHICH NO ETHIOPIAN WOULD EVER AGREE TO. IN FACT, BERHANE SAID, ONLY CONDITION UNDER WHICH ETHIOPIA WOULD AGREE TO SIT DOWN WITH SOMALIS WAS PRIOR REMOVAL OF ALL SOMALI FORCES FROM OGADEN, WHETHER BY VOLUNTARY ACTION ON THEIR PART OR BY FORCE OF ETHIOPIAN ARMS. RATHER THAN CONCEDE ANYTHING IN ADVANCE IN RETURN FOR FULL WITHDRAWAL, ETHIOPIA WAS PREPARED TO FIGHT AS LONG AS IT TAKES TO ASSURE REALIZATION OF THIS OBJECTIVE. ANY WOULD-BE FOREIGN MEDIATOR, WELL-MEANING OR OTHERWISE, WHO BELIEVED DIFFERENTLY WAS HEADING DOWN BLIND ALLEY, BERHANE SAID.

5. BERHANE SAID THAT IF US WAS NOT PREPARED TO CONDEMN SOMALIA AND CALL FOR HER WITHDRAWAL, US WOULD BE

WELL ADVISED TO CEASE MAKING PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT HORN  
ALTOGETHER, SINCE WHAT IT SAID SERVED ONLY TO ALIENATE  
ETHIOPIA, ENCOURAGE IRAN AND OTHERS TO MAKE UNACCEPTABLE  
THREATS, AND PROLONG RATHER THAN SHORTEN CONFLICT. BERHANE  
HAD NO ANSWER TO EMBOFF QUESTION WHY ETHIOPIA DEMANDED THAT  
US MAKE STATEMENTS CONDEMNATORY OF SOMALIA THAT GO FAR  
BEYOND ANYTHING OAU HAS SO FAR BEEN PREPARED TO STATE PUBLICLY.  
BERHANE INDICATED THAT MEETING IN WASHINGTON OF REPRESENT-  
ATIVES OF SAME FIVE POWERS TO WHICH SIAD BARRE HAD ONLY FEW  
DAYS PREVIOUSLY APPEALED FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS FURTHER  
OMINOUS DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIAN EYES. HE WAS NOT IN MOOD  
TO LISTEN TO COUNTERVAILING ARGUMENTS AND WAS NOT PREPARED  
TO SAY WHEN FONMIN FELLEKE WOULD RECEIVE ME TO HEAR FULL  
EXPOSITION OF US POSITION.  
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6. PART OF BERHANE'S ANGER NO DOUBT REFLECTED GENERAL  
ETHIOPIAN TOUCHINESS ABOUT ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH USSR AND  
CUBA, AND ETHIOPIAN PERCEPTION THAT US CRITICISM OF SOVIET-  
CUBAN ROLE HERE REFLECTS GROWING US TENDENCY TO VIEW SITUA-  
TION IN HORN IN EAST-WEST CONFRONTATIONAL TERMS. WHATEVER  
THE REASON, ETHIOPIAN DOUBTS ABOUT US GOOD INTENTIONS, AT  
LEAST AMONG THOSE WHO COUNT IN EPMG, HAVE PROBABLY NEVER  
BEEN MORE PRONOUNCED AND, AS BERHANE INDICATED, NEITHER FONMIN  
FELLEKE NOR ANYONE ELSE IN AUTHORITY SEEMS TO BE IN ANY  
MOOD TO LISTEN TO OUR WORDS UNTIL WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED TO  
THEM IN SOME PUBLIC FASHION OUR RECOGNITION THAT IT WAS  
ETHIOPIA WHICH WAS INVADED IN THIS WAR, AND THAT ANY SETTLE-  
MENT OF WAR PRESUPPOSES WITHDRAWAL OF ATTACKERS.

7. FOR THIS REASON, IT IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT EPMG WILL  
BE VERY SATISFIED WITH OAU PRESS RELEASE EITHER. EXCEPT FOR  
ITS SHARP CRITICISM OF IRAN, STATEMENT IS ONE FROM WHICH  
SOMALIA CAN DERIVE AT LEAST AS MUCH COMFORT AS ETHIOPIA.  
STILL, ETHIOPIA KEEPS ACCUSING US OF TRYING TO END RUN OAU,  
AND SINCE SENTIMENTS OF LAST PARAGRAPH OF OAU RELEASE ARE  
ONES THAT WE UNQUALIFIEDLY SHARE ANYWAY, WE HOPE OUR RESPONSE  
CAN BE PROMPT AND AUTHORITATIVE WITH NO DOUBT ABOUT OUR  
SUPPORT FOR OAU.  
MATHERON UNQTE VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTERVENTION, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, PRESS RELEASES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Subject:** OAU PRESS RELEASE ON IRAN AND HORN OF AFRICA  
**TAGS:** PBOR, PEPR, SOPN, AORG, MOPS, ET, IR, SO, US, XW, OAU  
**To:** USUN NEW YORK  
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